Letter from Taizé

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European Meeting of Young Adults in Wroclaw, Poland

At Easter, Brother Roger announced that the next European meeting of young adults will be held in Wroclaw, one of the largest cities in Poland, located in the south-west of the country. Those who took part in the European meeting held in that same city in 1989 remember the warm welcome in the families and the joy of being together for the first time with participants from all the countries of both Eastern and Western Europe.

The end of 1989, with Europe in the throes of major political changes, was a time of great enthusiasm. For many, it was also the beginning of a period of uncertainty.

Today, faced with all kinds of difficulties, Christians have an equally great hope to share: how can openness and reciprocity become a reality from one end of Europe to the other? How can we be witnesses to reconciliation and be attentive to the weakest members of society? What can we do to help as many people as possible to discover, or rediscover, the meaning God gives to their life? How can we find inner peace?

Living the pilgrimage of trust means setting out to share the life of Christians in Poland for five days, joining young adults from many different countries for prayer and to renew ourselves at the wellsprings of the faith. For each person, a time of preparation at home is essential in order to enter into the spirit of the pilgrimage.

Polish families are very hospitable. Six years ago, the 45,000 participants all stayed in families. Since then, a great many Polish people have taken part in the meetings in other countries. These experiences will ensure that the upcoming European meeting will be very intense. Young people from one of the parishes in the centre of Wroclaw speak about the prayer they have been holding for the past five years:

"We began praying together very simply in the church Saint-Mary-na-Piasku just after the European meeting. We did not want the fire to die down and we were interested in keeping up a regular common prayer. From the beginning, on the first Wednesday of each month, several hundred people met together. To strengthen the bonds between us, we asked groups from different parishes to take turns preparing the prayer. Then a student parish took over the task. Every year, this prayer helps us with the preparation of the European meeting. It is an important moment for those who are trying to begin working with youth in their own parishes and who need such a time to keep their involvement alive. Sometimes we invite the participants to a time of sharing in order to encourage one another in our different commitments.

"For us it is a great gift that such a simple prayer has lasted five years with so little structure, and we constantly see new faces."

➜ The next Letter from Taizé will have more information on the European meeting.

How Can We Keep On Praying Together?

People often ask this question after a stay in Taizé, or after taking part in a European meeting.

Some feel it is too difficult and give up before they start. And yet many of those who are fortunate enough to meet with a few others to pray together regularly end up discovering a style of prayer that is simple and beautiful, welcoming and intense, and adapted to their own situation.

In the greater Paris area, for example, after the European meeting, regular prayers have been taking place in about fifty parishes; often members of nearby churches are also invited. After the usual uncertainties of the first few times, a small group generally prepares the prayer, reminds others about it, invites still others and in this way, beyond a short-lived enthusiasm, the prayers go on.

As soon as people have the experience of a regular prayer, however rudimentary it may be, this gives them a point of reference in their daily life and helps them to be more open to God and to others. They forget their worries and the questions they had at the beginning: are there more of us or fewer than last time? Have we chosen the right day and hour?

Here are some suggestions for those thinking about preparing a regular time of prayer with others.

Setting up the prayer-space

If possible, try to meet in a church, making it beautiful and welcoming. If this is not possible, it is important to make the prayer-space as harmonious as you can, with a cross, an icon or an open Bible, candles, flowers. Place a carpet on the floor for those who wish to pray kneeling or sitting on the ground; chairs or benches should also be available for those who prefer. The lighting should be subdued, not glaring. It is preferable for all the participants to face the same direction, as a way of expressing that our prayer is directed not to one another but to Christ.

Structure

The prayer can begin with one or two meditative songs followed by a psalm. The psalm verses can be read aloud by one or two persons, or sung by soloists. Everyone can sing an alleluia after each verse. It is a good idea to choose just a few verses, the most accessible ones, rather than reading the entire psalm.

For example: Psalms 34, 42, 62, 73, 84, 98, 100, 103, 121, 139.

A song of light is a way of allowing children to be part of the prayer. A chant celebrating the light of Christ is sung. During the singing, some children come forward holding lighted tapers to light an oil-lamp or a large candle placed on a stand. This symbol reminds us that, even when the night is dark, in our personal life or in the life of humanity, Christ's love is a fire that never goes out.

The Bible text chosen as a reading should not be too long and should be able to be understood without any explanation. The *Letter from Taizé*, published every two months, proposes a short reading for each day of the year.

Next, a meditative chant can introduce a time of silence. This is not in order to force an inner silence using some method, creating a kind of inner void, but rather to allow Christ to pray in us with the trust of a child. And one day, we will discover that the depths of our being are inhabited by a Presence. If necessary, some soft background music may help to cover outside noises.

The silence can be followed by a prayer of intercession prepared in advance. One or two persons take turns reading the petitions, with a chant such as *Kyrie eleison*, *Gospodi pomiluj*, or "Hear us, O Lord" sung after each one. Following the written petitions, there can be a time for spontaneous personal intentions. These should be brief and should be addressed to God; this is not a time to make speeches to communicate one's own thoughts or personal opinions to others. Each of the spontaneous intercessions can likewise be followed by a Kyrie or Gospodi.

The prayer of intercession end with the Our Father, followed perhaps by a short concluding prayer and several meditative songs.

So that the prayer can end on a peaceful note, another idea would be to play some soft music, so that each person can leave when he or she desires.

Singing

Song is one of the most essential elements of worship. Short chants, repeated again and again, give it a meditative character. Using just a few words, they express a basic reality of faith, quickly grasped by the mind. As the words are sung over a great many times, this reality gradually penetrates the whole being. And these simple songs then enable us to keep on praying when we are alone, by night and by day, sometimes in the silence of our hearts when we are at work.

If a song is begun spontaneously, the key is generally too low. A tuning-fork or pitch-pipe can help, or a guitar or recorder can give the first note or accompany the melody. The person who begins the songs should also make sure the tempo does not slow down too much, as this tends to happen when singing goes on for some time.

Song-practice should take place outside of the prayer itself, so that the atmosphere remains meditative. During the prayer, no one should direct the music; in this way everyone can face the cross, the icon or the altar. Songs in different languages are appropriate for large international gatherings. In a neighbourhood prayer with all the generations present, most of the songs should be in languages actually understood by some of the participants (or possibly in Latin). If possible, give each person a sheet with the words of the songs. You can also include one or two well-known local songs or hymns.

An Easter Prayer

A time of the joy of the Resurrection, of light and peace. A time to celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit and the beginnings of the Church. From Easter to Pentecost, the paschal candle is aflame with the light of Christ.

Opening chants

Confitemini Domino; Stay with us

Psalm

read or sung with Alleluia sung after each verse.

Praise the Lord, it is good to sing praise! Sing for our God, it is right to adore!

The Lord restores Jerusalem again, bringing the exiles back, healing the broken in heart, binding up all their wounds.

God counts the number of the stars, calling each by its name. Sing, give thanks to the Lord, give praise on the harp to our God.

God robes the heavens in clouds and pours out rain for the earth, making grass grow on the hills.

God gives to the cattle their food, to the young of the ravens that cry. His delight is in those who worship him, in all who trust in his love.

Psalm 147 (or else 16)

Chant before the reading

Laudate omnes gentes, Alleluia

Reading

Jesus said to his disciples: When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. You also are to testify, because you have been with me from the beginning...

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

(John 15,26-27 & 16,13-14; or else: John 20,19-23)

Chant before the silence

Jesus, your light

Silence

Intercessions

followed by: Gospodi pomiluj or: Kyrie eleison or: Spiritus Jesu Christi

- We pray for all Christians, that they may walk in the joy of your resurrection, and maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
- We pray for the leaders of the nations, that they may exercise their responsibilities as servants of justice and peace.
- We pray for those suffering from illness, grief, oppression and exile, that the good news of the resurrection may offer them comfort and help.
- Comfort those who are burdened by trials, and place in their hearts your words of eternal life. Holy Spirit, Lord and Giver of life, you are light and the bearer of light, you are goodness and the source of all goodness.
- Keep all nations from hatred and war, and bring humanity together by the power of your Spirit.
- ...

Our Father

sung if possible

Closing prayer

the Easter prayer below can be used

Chants

to continue the prayer

Veni lumen cordium..., Veni Creator Spiritus...

Jesus, Risen Lord, even when we feel all alone, you are there. If there is a kind of doubt within us, you understand us. Your Gospel brings with it such hope that we would like to give ourselves to the very end in order to follow you. And we welcome your words: "Whoever gives their life for love of Christ will find it."

Prayer by Brother Roger of Taizé for Easter 1995

Elijah, the Road to the Wellspring

I Kings 19

The third part of the letter *The Wonder of A Love* mentions the story of the prophet Elijah (I Kings 19). Elijah is a man of action, "full of zeal for the Lord" (v.14), who does all he can to help his people remain faithful to God despite the opposition from the powerful sectors of society. After having given all that was in him to overcome the prophets of Baal in a great contest, a small additional resistance is enough to demolish him. He flees into the wilderness and wishes for death. He has reached the limits of his human possibilities and now all he sees in front of him is the void. He feels his life is useless and meaningless, that he has accomplished nothing.

And precisely at this moment, in the midst of the darkness, God takes care of him. For his part he has to learn to let God take the initiative, like a newborn baby nourished by its mother. His trials enable him to discover a new face of God: not someone who asks from him something he is no longer able to give, but someone who is the Source of his life, who gives him all he needs to set out on the road. Beyond his abilities to act, to take concrete steps, Elijah discovers that he is called to receive, to welcome what is given.

Then, a second stage begins: nourished by God, the prophet sets out again in the wilderness, but now his journey changes its character. It is no longer a flight but rather a pilgrimage to the wellspring, symbolized by Horeb, or Sinai, the holy mountain ("By night, we will go to the spring...," Letter 1995). This God who gives everything wants human beings to collaborate with him, inviting us to seek an ever closer relationship with the Source of our life. The number 40 indicates that Elijah's pilgrimage is in continuity with the journey of Moses and the Israelites during the Exodus (cf. Deut 2,7), as well as being the symbol of a time of transition towards a renewed discovery of God (cf. Exodus 24,18).

For now God, always the same and always new, is going to show himself to Elijah in a new way. Returning to the wellspring is never an exercise in nostalgia; it is always a springboard for going forward with new energy. First of all, on the mountain all the ways God previously revealed his holiness pass in review in front of the prophet (hurricane, earthquake, fire...; cf. Exodus 19,16-19) and each time we are told that God is not there. Then God becomes present in the murmur of a gentle breeze, in a whisper of silence.

Elijah is one of the first to discover what we can call God's *interiority*. Even if, in the Bible, God is sometimes manifested by means of external realities (since God is the Creator of all things, visible and invisible), his "power" is of a completely different order than a force of nature. The mystery of God is first and foremost a *personal* reality, and this means that God demonstrates his "power" above all by speaking to the depths of the human person, to what the Bible calls the heart, by "kindling a flame in the secret recesses of our being" (Letter 1995).

In the Bible, the heart does not stand for the feelings but for the most personal part of a human being, where everyone is unique. The heart is the centre of the personality, the seat of reflection and especially of decision, where we look for the meaning of our life and where a "yes" for a whole lifetime can take shape. And it is above all there that God makes himself present and acts.

But this does not mean that faith is a purely inward reality, limited to thoughts and intentions. The Biblical outlook does not admit of any separation between the different parts of the being: the heart is the whole person considered from the viewpoint of its centre. "Filled by his love, the heart opens to others" (Letter 1995). What happens in the heart gradually transforms the whole of life; it changes our way of living and thus exerts an influence on the world around us. Jesus expresses this by a simple image, that of a tree bearing fruit according to what it is (Luke 6,43-45). The fire God kindles in our heart is a source of responsibility towards others.

And so, Elijah is sent back by God to his people. But now everything is different: the prophet knows that he is not left to his own devices in attempting to fulfill his mission. God is with him, and will ensure in the final analysis that the nation remains faithful (v.18).

The experience of the prophet Elijah helps us better to understand and to practice prayer. At times, prayer can seem to be a reality that is beyond our grasp. But perhaps prayer is simpler than we think. It begins when, like Elijah, we become aware of our limits and our need for a relationship with Another. Then we withdraw, not necessarily to a "wilderness" but especially to the secret recesses of our heart (cf. Matt 6,6), far from the noises of the world, to listen to the whisper of silence, "to be refreshed by living water welling up in us" (Letter 1995). And gradually, in us something is transformed. Like Elijah, we receive the strength to go back to the world to be witnesses to a love whose power is all the more evident in those places where we are most vulnerable (2 Cor 12,9).

MEDITATING ON THE WORD

JULY

These short readings, taken from the midday prayer in Taizé, can be read several times during the day. The references indicate longer readings. If you have time to read only one, the one in bold type is suggested.

Mt 4.18-22 2 Co 8.1-5

1 SAT Jesus saw Simon and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, "Come follow me, and I will make you fishers of people." And at once they left their nets and followed him.

Lk 9.51-62 1 K 19.16,19-21

2 SUN Someone said to Jesus, "I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus answered, "Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."

Jn 20.24-29 Ep 2.19-22

3 MON St THOMAS
Jesus said to Thomas: You believe because you can see me. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.

2 Co 8.7-9 Mt 6.1-6

4 TUE Our Lord Jesus Christ, though he was rich, became poor for your sake, so that through his poverty you might become rich.

Mt 6.7-15 2 Co 9.6-9

5 WED Jesus said: Some think that by using many words in their prayer, they will make themselves heard. Do not be like them; your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Ps 27 2 Co 9.10-15 **Mt 6.16-18**

6 THU Of you, Lord, my heart says: "Seek his face!"

2 Co 12.7-10 Mt 6.19-24

7 FRI Paul writes: God said to me: My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness.

Mt 6.25-34 2 Co 13.11-13

8 SAT Jesus said: Do not worry about your life. Seek first God's kingdom and his saving justice.

Is 66.10-14 **Lk 10.1-12,17-20**

9 SUN The Lord says: I am going to send peace to my people like a river. When you see this, your heart will rejoice.

Is 40.1-5 Mt 7.1-5

10 MON Isaiah said: Prepare a way through the desert for the Lord. Make a straight road for our God.

Mt 7.24-29 Is 40.6-8

11 TUE Jesus said: Whoever listens to my words and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on rock.

Mt 8.5-10 Is 40.9-11

12 WED A centurion said to Jesus: Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word and my servant will be healed.

Mt 8.14-17 Is 40.25-28

13 THU Jesus healed the sick, fulfilling what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: He bore our sicknesses away and carried our diseases.

Is 40.29-31 Mt 8.18-22

14 FRI God gives strength to the weary and the weak.

Is 41.8-10 **Mt 7.7-11**

15 SAT The Lord says to his people: I took you from the ends of the earth, I have chosen you and will not cast you off. Fear not, for I am with you.

Lk 10.25-37 Dt 30.10-14

16 SUN Having told the parable of the good Samaritan, Jesus asked the teacher of the law, "Who showed themselves to be a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" He replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Mt 9.1-8 Is 41.17-20

17 MON Jesus said to the scribes, "So that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins..." Then he said to the paralytic, "Stand up, take your bed and go home." And the man got up and went home.

Mt 9.9-13 Is 42.5-7

18 TUE Jesus said: I desire mercy, not sacrifice. Indeed, I have not come to call the just, but sinners.

Is 42.10,16 Mt 9.14-17

19 WED The Lord says: I shall lead my people by a road that is unknown to them. I shall turn the darkness into light before them.

Is 43.1-4 Mt 9.18-26

20 THU Thus says the Lord who created you: Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by your name, you are mine.

Mt 9.35-38 Is 43.10-13

21 FRI Jesus said to his disciples: The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest.

Rm 8.28-30 **Jn 20.1,11-18**

22 SAT In all things God works for the good of those who love him, those who have been called according to his purpose.

Lk 10.38-42 Gn 18.1-10

23 SUN Jesus said to Martha: You are worried and upset about many things, and yet few are needed, indeed only one.

Mt 10.1-10 Is 44.1-4

24 MON Jesus sent out the twelve, saying: Proclaim that the kingdom of heaven is close at hand. Freely you have received, freely give.

Mt 20.24-28 2 Co 4.7-10

25 TUE St JAMES
Jesus said: The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Mt 10.38-42 Is 44.21-23

26 WED Jesus said: If anyone gives so much as a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple he will certainly not lose his reward.

Mt 11.1-6 Is 45.2-6

27 THU Jesus said: Go back and report what you hear and see: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, the dead are raised to life, and good news is proclaimed to the poor.

Is 45.18-19 Mt 11.7-15

28 FRI The Lord says: I did not tell my people to search for me in chaos. I am the Lord God, who proclaims justice, who speaks what is true.

Mt 11.25-30 Is 45.22-24

29 SAT Jesus said: Come to me, you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest.

Lk 11.1-13 Col 2.12-14

30 SUN Jesus said: Ask, and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you.

Is 46.3-4,8-9 Mt 12.1-8

31 MON The Lord says to his people: I have carried you since you were conceived. Until your old age I shall be the same, I shall sustain and save you.

JOHANNINE HOURS

JOHN 13,31-35

Johannine hours are meant as a way of seeking God in silence and prayer in the midst of our daily life. During the course of a day, take an hour or so to read the Bible passage with the short commentary and to reflect on the questions which follow. Afterwards, a group of 3 to 10 people can meet to share what they have discovered and perhaps for a time of prayer.

Why is it that Jesus speaks of glory at the moment he is about to be handed over to an ignominious death? (The word "glorify" is found five times in v.31-32!) It is love that glorifies the "Son of man." He is already "glorified" because he has loved without keeping back anything for himself. When Judas leaves to get those who are going to arrest Jesus, the die is already cast: Jesus will give his life for those he loves. The glory of love will shine forever on the cross. "God will glorify him in himself and he will glorify him very soon." That means: God will raise up Jesus so that he can henceforth love always and everywhere, giving himself as the life of the world with no limits in time and space.

Jesus knows that, in their sadness or their confusion, the disciples will look for him. So he tells them where they can find him. Not in a place which is far away and inaccessible, but in the love they will have for one another. Christ leaves with them, as a testament, the commandment to love one another. This is a "new commandment" because Christ does more than just give an order or an example. As the inheritance he leaves them, he places his love in the hearts of his followers. In the Gospel according to Saint John, the new commandment fills exactly the place where someone familiar with the other gospels would expect to find the Eucharist. Christ gives us the ability to love by giving himself. God does not merely express his will; he works in us what he expects of us.

And not only do believers encounter Christ in their mutual love, but this love is likewise the only reality that makes the content of their faith credible and accessible to others (cf. v.35).

- Where do I try to find Christ?
- How can we make faith credible to those around us?

MEDITATING ON THE WORD

AUGUST

These short readings, taken from the midday prayer in Taizé, can be read several times during the day. The references indicate longer readings. If you have time to read only one, the one in bold type is suggested.

Is 48.20-21 Mt 12.9-14

1 TUE The people of God did not go thirsty when he led them through the desert; he made water spring out of the rock for them.

Mt 12.15-21 Is 49.13-15

2 WED In Jesus the words of the prophet Isaiah were fulfilled: "Look! My servant whom I have chosen. I will place my Spirit upon him. In him the nations will put their hope."

Mt 12.46-50 Is 50.4-7

3 THU Jesus said: Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.

Mt 13.18-23 Is 52.13-15

4 FRI Jesus said: The seed which was sown in good soil is like someone who hears the Word and understands it; that person bears fruit.

Jn 15.9-13 Is 53.1-5

5 SAT Jesus said: This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you.

Lk 9.28b-36 Dn 7.9-10,13-14

6 SUN TRANSFIGURATION Jesus took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. And as he was praying, the appearance of his face changed. Then a cloud enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud saying: This is my Son, the Chosen One; listen to him.

Is 54.8,10-14 Mt 13.24-30

7 MON Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, my faithful love for you will not be shaken, says the Lord.

Is 55.6-9 Mt 13.31-32

8 TUE Seek the Lord while he is near. Turn to our God, he pardons freely.

Mt 13.33-35 Is 55.10-13

9 WED Jesus said: The kingdom of heaven is like the yeast a woman took and mixed in with a large amount of flour until the whole thing rose.

Mt 13.44-46 Is 56.1-7

10 THU Jesus said: The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field that someone has found; he hides it again, and in his joy sells everything he has and buys that field.

Mt 14.13-21 Is 57.14-15

11 FRI Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, Jesus gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, who gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied.

Is 58.9-11 **Jn 3.16-17**

12 SAT If you do away with the accusing finger and malicious talk, if you give what is yours for the hungry, then your light will rise in the darkness and your darkest hour will be like the middle of the day.

Lk 12.32-40 Ws 18.6-9

13 SUN Jesus said: Give to those in need. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure that will not fail, in heaven where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Lk 17.20-21 Is 59.21

14 MON Jesus said: The coming of the kingdom of God cannot be observed, for the kingdom of God is among you.

Lk 1.39-56 Zp 3.14-18

15 TUE THE VIRGIN MARY Mary said: My soul praises the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has been mindful of his humble servant.

Is 60.18-20 Mt 16.21-23

16 WED The Lord says to his people: No longer will violence be heard of in your land. You will call your gates "Praise". The sun will no more be your light by day, nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you, for the Lord will be your everlasting light, your God will be your glory.

Mt 16.24-28 Is 61.1-2

17 THU Jesus said: If anyone wants to follow me, let them renounce themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

Mt 18.1-5 Is 62.1-2

18 FRI Jesus said: Anyone who welcomes one little child in my name welcomes me.

Mt 18.19-22 Is 63.7-14

19 SAT Peter asked Jesus, "How many times should I forgive my brother if he wrongs me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "Not seven times, but seventy-seven times."

Lk 12.49-50 Heb 12.1-4

20 SUN Jesus said: I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already burning!

Mt 18.12-14 Is 63.16-64.7

21 MON Jesus said: If a shepherd finds one sheep that was lost, it gives him more joy than ninety-nine others that did not stray at all. In the same way, your Father in heaven does not want even one to be lost.

Mt 19.16-22 Is 66.10-14

22 TUE Jesus said to a rich young man: If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.

Ps 147 Is 66.18-20 **Mt 19.23-26**

23 WED Give praise to the Lord! It is good to sing praises to the one who heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds.

Mt 19.27-30 Ph 1.3-11

24 THU Jesus said: Anyone who leaves home, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children or fields for my sake will receive much more and will inherit eternal life.

Ph 1.20-26 Mt 21.28-32

25 FRI Paul writes: For me, to live is Christ.

Jn 20.19-22 Ph 1.27-30

26 SAT The Risen Christ said to the disciples: Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.

Jn 6.60-69 Ep 5.21-32

27 SUN Seeing that many of his disciples were turning away, Jesus said to the Twelve, "What about you, do you want to go away too?" Peter answered, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words of eternal life."

Ph 2.1-4 **Jn 4.1-14**

28 MON Paul writes: Be one in love, one in heart and one in mind; do nothing out of jealousy or vanity.

Jn 4.14-26 Ph 2.6-11

29 TUE Jesus said: Anyone who drinks the water I give will never be thirsty again. The water I give them will become a spring of water within them, welling up to eternal life.

Ph 3.8-12 Jn 4.27-42

30 WED Paul writes: I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and communion in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Ph 3.17-4.1 Jn 4.43-54

31 THU Paul writes: Our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transfigure our lowly bodies into the likeness of his glorious body.

JOHANNINE HOURS

1 CORINTHIANS 8,1-13

Johannine hours are meant as a way of seeking God in silence and prayer in the midst of our daily life. During the course of a day, take an hour or so to read the Bible passage with the short commentary and to reflect on the questions which follow. Afterwards, a group of 3 to 10 people can meet to share what they have discovered and perhaps for a time of prayer.

Knowledge puffs up, love builds up. These words are still a rule of life, even if the problem that provided Saint Paul with the occasion to formulate them has long since given way to other questions.

The Christians of Corinth had asked the apostle if they were allowed to take part in a meal held in a pagan temple. According to custom, important events were celebrated in temples and, following the sacrifice itself, parents and friends were invited to a banquet. Other people, still more prudent, wondered if they should not give up eating meat entirely, even at home since one could never be sure whether the meat sold on the market came in fact from a pagan temple.

Saint Paul takes the question very seriously, because it has been worrying believers and dividing the community. But he does not answer yes or no, for that might risk endorsing a partisan spirit. His mission as apostle is to bring people together and not to create divisions. First he appeals to the "knowledge" of all the members of the Church. He invites them to reflect with him and to decide for themselves (cf. 10,15). Then he goes further. In the Bible, all knowledge is for the sake of a communion. Whoever relies on their better understanding of a situation to distance themselves from others has not understood; "he does not know as well as he should." It is love that has the knowledge that builds communion.

Knowing the content of the faith is important. In this way we know that "there is no God other than the One." God the Creator places everything at our disposition. But we only know this God, the One Jesus Christ revealed to us as Father, if we try with all our strength to avoid whatever would trouble other members of the Church or even lead to divisions.

- How does knowledge of our faith enable us to build a communion?
- How can we deal with different ways of looking at things that arise in our Christian communities?

very Week

hroughout the Year

Meetings of Young Adults in Taizé

Every week throughout the year, it is possible to come to Taizé to take part in meetings that bring together, from Sunday to the following Sunday, young adults from throughout Europe and from different continents. It is also possible for adults and families to take part in meetings prepared for them. This year, those who spend a week in Taizé can choose among several different possibilities:

The group devoted to the wellsprings of faith will alternate introductions to Bible texts with times of sharing in small groups and listening to witnesses from Europe and other continents. Theme-groups will enable people to reflect on topics such as searching for inner peace, committing ourselves alongside those who are forgotten, responding to Christ's call, and being bearers of trust and reconciliation. For all, there will be hours devoted to vital questions and concrete projects. Questions such as: "What gives meaning to life? What can we do in the face of human suffering?"

Those who wish to go further in understanding the Bible can join a group where the introductions are centred on a particular theme, for example "the Beatitudes".

New areas have been set up to offer more possibilities for silence to those who desire it.

Those who have already come to Taizé or who have taken part in a European meeting can, if they so desire, have a different experience by spending several weeks in Taizé. An itinerary of formation will be proposed to them: speaking in depth with a brother or a sister to help them view their own personal journey in the light of the Gospel, working in a team with other young people from different countries to take responsibility for some of the tasks related to the welcome.

Depending on their situation, they can be welcomed free of charge beginning the second or third week. They should write to Taizé in advance.

Accommodation
Living conditions are simple. During the summer months, bring a tent if at all possible.
Those under 30 stay in tents or, in the winter, in heated dormitories (boys and girls separate). Bring sleeping-bag, blankets, lightweight mattress.
Those over 30, depending on age, stay in dormitories or in rooms for two or several persons, in Taizé or, in the event of space limitations, in the surrounding area. The exact place will be indicated upon arrival. Bring sheets or sleeping-bag.

Costs
Upon arrival, participants are asked to contribute toward daily costs. (Some young people are unable to contribute.) The welcome of visitors is financed by these contributions and by the work of the community. No organizations provide any financial assistance. Suggested prices for 1995, in French francs per day, for those under 30: GB, USA, CAN, AUS, NZ 28 to 37; SCAND 36 to 44; IRL 22 to 29. Since they have more resources, adults are asked to pay more. Suggested prices for adults: GB, USA, CAN, AUS, NZ 63 to 94 (tent); 77 to 104 (dormitory); 92 to 120 (room); SCAND 79 to 113 (tent); 99 to 128 (dormitory); 114 to 144 (room); IRL 47 to 67 (tent); 58 to 78 (dormitory); 72 to 92 (room). Specific lodging places cannot be reserved in advance.
The brothers live by their own work alone. The community accepts no donations for itself, not even a brother's personal inheritance, nothing at all. Many of the expenses incurred through the welcoming of young people, as well as the maintenance of buildings, are covered by the community.
"Operation Hope" helps pay part of the travel expenses for young people who wish to go to Taizé or to European meetings but are unable to meet the costs on their own. It also sends humanitarian aid to problem areas around the world.

Medical insurance: bring documents needed (E 111 for EC residents).

A good welcome for everyone will be assured if all those who can do so avoid coming during the first week of August and plan instead to come in late June, early July, late August or in September.

To register
Send the registration form below.

For further information, write to Meetings, Taizé Community, 71250 Taizé, France. Tel (33) 85 50 30 02 (in English, 10am to noon and 4:30 to 6:30pm) or, if urgent, 85 50 30 30. Fax: (33) 85 50 30 16.

Registration form

to be sent to:
Meetings, TAIZE-COMMUNITY, 71250 CLUNY, France.
Tel: (+33) 85 50 30 02, Fax (+33) 85 50 30 16

First Name :

Family Name :

Address :

(with post code and country)

Telephone : ..... Occupation : ..... Age: .....
I wish to participate in the meetings from ..... to .....
(Please circle "yes" or "no")
Will bring my own tent : yes / no
Means of transport: Nuneaton Coaches other coach minibus car train other : .....
For the disabled, adult group-leaders, those who cannot sleep on the floor, please fill in the following:
I need a bed yes/no. If "yes" please circle below who you are:
woman man couple family with ..... children disabled person helper of disabled person
(age of the children : .....) I receive the Letter of Taizé : yes / no
I have already been to Taizé : yes / no (last stay : month ..... year .....)

Listening to the Continents

Senegal

A Whole Night of Prayer

Some Taizé brothers live in a poor district of Dakar, Senegal, in West Africa. They tell of a night of prayer that took place there:

During this past Advent, young Christians of Grand-Yoff, an immense district of Dakar, organized a march-pilgrimage that lasted the whole night.

Everyone gathered at the parish on Saturday evening: 500 young people are there, representing all the sectors of the district. Different groups will take turns leading the march in the labyrinth of sand streets under a beautiful full moon. In the front a large cross, and an icon of John the Baptist: the theme of the night is "Preparing the ways of the Lord." While the participants walk, they pray the rosary in a low voice. Sometimes a refrain is sung. After walking for twenty minutes, we stop at a crossroads for a short station: reading an episode in the life of John the Baptist, commentary, song, prayer, response. And the pilgrimage sets out again.

The parish is so huge that it takes all night to cover it. A peaceful and discreet procession in these predominantly Muslim neighbourhoods, a fervent prayer for this people whose life is becoming more and more difficult, a living parable of what a Christian minority wishes to be in this unique situation of tolerance which is Senegal today.

Five o'clock in the morning. Everyone, young people, mothers, and children who never tire (very few gave up during the night), meet in church for the Sunday morning Eucharist.

Brazil

An Image of the Gospel

Several Taizé brothers have been living for years in a poor district of the city of Alagoinhas, Brazil. One of them writes:

Every afternoon children from our district come to see us. They stay for a few hours; we organize things so that the older children take care of the smaller ones. For the past two months two of us have been going to "Alto da Cruz," another poor district, to invite the children there to come and take part in these afternoons in our home.

This was not easy for them at first because there is sometimes violence in the streets and the districts. A child who loses his way in another district runs the risk of being beaten. The first step was taken by the girls. Then some boys came along with them, proud to offer them protection. What is touching is that some of these boys were the ones who themselves used to beat up children from other streets who came to visit us, throwing stones at them or stealing the piece of bread or the orange that we had given them.

The day before yesterday, we were present for a festival that was like an image from the Gospel. Recently a boy from "Alto da Cruz," a gang leader, was killed by the police. So the children of our street prepared a celebration to welcome the children from "Alto da Cruz." Decorations, cakes, games were ready when, at the time agreed upon, about sixty children from there arrived. Some had prepared drawings and texts very close to the meaning of the Gospel parables concerning the banquet in the Kingdom of God.

Colombia

Being a Person of Communion

The following lines were taken from a letter written by a girl from Colombia who has returned home after a long stay in Taizé:

I am writing you from one of the most outlying areas of my diocese. To get here, you have to travel for eighteen hours, first on mule-back, then on foot when the road is no longer passable. Lost in a valley in the mountains there is the native community of the Motilones, whose language is called Bori, but who speak a little Spanish. I was very happy to offer to spend two weeks with them at Christmas time. My joy grew as I began to live among them, in spite of the difficulties. I am trying to share with them the bread of the Word and of the love of this God whom I love: after 500 years of evangelization on the American continent, these people have not yet heard of him! I would like to help them learn to know God without harming their own culture, and at the same time help them to better their living conditions, especially concerning hygiene and diet, to prevent illness and to use their resources better to nourish themselves.

Here you have to live the Gospel with authenticity, "taking nothing for the road." We cook and eat with them in poverty, but we lack nothing, because farming the land and hunting provide enough food to eat.

From here, I think about the silence in Taizé. The views of nature help me to pray. The only noises you hear are the song of birds and the notes of my guitar. It is a source of joy for them, and for me an instrument of evangelization and prayer. Here you rediscover the values of the first and most authentic vocation of the Church, to proclaim the Gospel everywhere, in season and out of season. Here my spirit is fortified to continue this task, my only certainty being that God is in charge of my life-plan. I am full of confident trust. If I surrender myself to him, nothing will be lacking.

At times of tiredness and dryness, my thoughts turn to Taizé and I remember the community life there. Being a person of communion: these words should be written in big letters.

Letter from Taizé

Ordinary subscription: 40 FF (France 30 FF)
Supporting subscription: 75 or 150 FF
Airmail subscription (outside Europe only): 50 FF
(Annual subscription)

means of payment:

- by **credit card** (*Visa, Mastercard, Eurocard, Carte Bleue*) send the number of your card and dates of validity to Taizé and say what sum in French Francs you wish to transfer.
- by **international Giro transfer** in French Francs addressed to: *Lettre de Taizé*, CCP 20041-01007-0061446M038-71 or CCP LYON 614 46 M.
- by **cheque** in French Francs to Lettre de Taizé, F-71250 Taizé Communauté made payable through Société Générale (Eurocheques in French Francs accepted).
- In the following countries it is possible to pay the subscription **within the country**: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Korea, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, UK and USA. Write to Taizé to ask for the address in your country.

Correspondence:
Letter from Taizé, 71250 Taizé-Communauté, France

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